MR. CHAIRMAN: Ahluwaliaji, precious time is being lost.

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: सर, फिर जवाब नहीं आएगा।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just ask the supplementary.

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: सर, डी.आर.टी. इन्हीं के अंडर है। डी.आर.टी. के तहत कितने केस स्मॉल स्केल पर हैं और कितने बड़े उद्योगों के ऊपर हैं और ...(**व्यवधान**)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is not the issue here.

श्री एस.एस. अहलुवालिया: सर, लास्ट पार्ट। जब वन टाइम सैटलमेंट आप उद्यमियों को देते हैं तो दूसरी बार जब वह लोन लेने जाता है तो उसको नहीं दिया जाता, वह बार्ड हो जाता है, उसको नहीं दिया जाता। ऐसा लघु उद्यमियों के साथ क्यों है? सत्यम जैसे मालिक रामलिंगम राजू के साथ नहीं है। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not introduce extraneous subjects.

श्री महावीर प्रसाद: माननीय सभापति महोदय, हमारे विद्वान मित्र ने बड़ा मौलिक प्रश्न उठाया है, ऋण क्रांति योजना के अन्तर्गत एक लाख तीस हजार से अधिक प्रस्ताव अनुमोदित किए गए हैं। कुल बयालिस सौ करोड़ रुपए के लिए है। इसी के तहत एक करोड़ रुपए तक हमने क्रेडिट गारंटी योजना में किया है। क्रेडिट गारंटी योजना में छोटे लघु उद्योग सैक्टर के लिए सिडबी को सात हजार करोड़ रुपया हमने दिया है। फिर उसके बाद दो हजार करोड़ रुपया और दिया गया। केवल इस सैक्टर को मजबूत करने के लिए सिडबी के आधार पर हम काम कर रहे हैं। आपने जो दूसरा प्रश्न पूछा है, उसके लिए डिटेल मैं आपको लिख कर भेज दूंगा।

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether they have taken any action against the banks, because banks are not cooperating with the SMEs. The banks have to manage the entrepreneurs. The SMEs want to have marketing management services and bank assistance, but banks are not cooperating with them. Has the Government taken any action against those banks? It not, are they contemlating to take any action against them?

श्री महावीर प्रसाद: आदरणीय सभापति जी, माननीय सदस्य ने बैंकों के खिलाफ कार्यवाही करने के बारे में सवाल पूछा है। मैं आपके माध्यम से उनसे आग्रह करूंगा कि किसी भी बैंक के खिलाफ या बैंकों की जो गतिविधियां हैं, उनके खिलाफ वह लिखकर दें। अभी तक मैंने इसमें कोई कार्यवाही नहीं की है, चूंकि कहने के लिए कह दिया जाता है, अगर लिखकर दें कि अमुक बैंक ने अमुक व्यक्ति को यह ऋण नहीं दिया है, ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी: मंत्री जी, इसके बारे में अहलुवालिया जी ने अभी आपको बताया है। ...(**व्यवधान**)...

श्री महावीर प्रसाद: उन्होंने अभी बताया तो है, लेकिन तिवारी जी, इसके बारे में लिखकर दीजिए। हम तो जांच कराने के लिए तैयार हैं, परन्तु आप लिखकर दे दीजिए।

देश में भुखमरी की स्थिति

*2. **श्री बलवंत *उर्फ* बाल आपटे**: ††
श्री श्रीगोपाल व्यास :

क्या **कृषि** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

†† सभा में यह प्रश्न श्री बलवंत *उर्फ* बाल आपटे द्वारा पूछा गया।

(क) क्या यह सच है कि "इंटरनेशनल फूड पालिसी रिसर्च इंस्टीट्यूट" ने कहा है कि भारत में 23 करोड़ लोग भूख से पीड़ित हैं;

(ख) सरकार के पास इस विषय से संबंधित गत पांच वर्षों के राज्य-वार आंकड़े क्या हैं;

(ग) क्या वर्तमान आर्थिक परिदृश्य को ध्यान में रखते हुए इस स्थिति के और बिगड़ने की संभावना है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो इस समस्या से निपटने की योजना क्या है?

कृषि मंत्री (श्री शरद पवार) : (क) से (घ) विवरण सभा पटल पर रख दिया गया है।

विवरण

(क) और (ख) नहीं, श्रीमान जी। अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय खाद्य नीति अनुसंधान संस्थान "भारत राज्य भूख सूचकांक राज्य में भूख की तुलना," पर अपने दस्तावेज (अक्तूबर 2008) में उल्लेख करता है कि भारत में 200 मिलियन से अधिक लोग हैं जो "खाद्य असुरक्षित" हैं।

योजना आयोग के अनुसार ऐसे लोगों की संख्या के बारे में कोई आधिकारिक अनुमान नहीं है जो देश में भुखमरी से ग्रस्त हैं। तथापि, भारतीय परिवारों में खाद्य उपभोग की अनुभव की गई पर्याप्तता (1999-2000 हेतु रिपोर्ट संख्या 466 तथा 2004-05 हेतु रिपोर्ट संख्या 512) पर राष्ट्रीय प्रतिदर्श सर्वेक्षण संगठन की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 1999-2000 से 2004-05 के दौरान ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में ऐसे परिवारों की संख्या जिन्होंने पर्याप्त भोजन नहीं लिया 3.3% से घटकर 2.4% हो गई और शहरी क्षेत्रों में ऐसे परिवारों की संख्या 0.9% से घटकर 0.5% हो गई है। राज्यवार ब्यौरे ×विवरण-I में दिए गए हैं *(नीचे देखिए)।*

(ग) और (घ) चालू आर्थिक परिदृश्य से भारत पर शेष विश्व की तुलना में बहुत कम असर पड़ने की संभावना है क्योंकि बहुत से सकारात्मक निर्धन नीति उपाय पहले से ही कार्यान्वयन में है। इस संबंध में प्रमुख योजनाएं तथा कार्यक्रम हैं (i) राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारन्टी अधिनियम जो प्रत्येक ऐसे परिवार जिसके व्यस्क सदस्य अकुशल हस्त कार्य करने के इच्छुक हैं, के एक वित्तीय वर्ष में कम से कम 100 दिनों की मजदूरी रोजगार प्रदान करने की गारन्टी प्रदान करता है (ii) स्वरोजगार के सभी पहलुओं को शामिल करते हुए स्वर्णजयन्ती ग्राम स्वरोजगार योजना (iii) छः वर्ष तक के बच्चों, गर्भवती महिलाओं तथा स्तन्यदा माता को स्वास्थ्य, पोषण तथा शैक्षिक सेवाओं का एकीकृत पैकेज प्रदान करने के लिए एकीकृत बाल विकास सेवाएं (iv) बच्चों के बीच नामांकन, निरंतरता तथा उपस्थिति बढ़ाने एवं साथ ही उनके पोषण स्तरों में सुधार हेतु प्रारंभ की गई मध्याह्न भोजन योजना (v) लक्षित सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली समाज के गरीब तथा कमजोर वर्गों को बाजार मूल्यों से बहुत कम मूल्यों पर खाद्यान्न प्रदान करता है। (v) अन्त्योदय अन्न योजना निर्धन परिवारों में निर्धनतम परिवारों को बहुत अधिक रियायती दर पर खाद्यान्न प्रदान करता है (vi) राष्ट्रीय सामाजिक सहायता कार्यक्रम का उद्देश्य गरीब परिवारों को वृद्धावस्था, कमाऊ व्यक्ति की मृत्यु एवं प्रसूति की स्थिति में सामाजिक सहायता लाभ प्रदान करता है। सरकार ने निर्धारित मापदण्डों के अनुसार गरीबी रेखा से नीचे के परिवारों से संबंधित व्यक्तियों के कुछ वर्गों को केन्द्रीय सहायता के रूप में प्रति लाभार्थी 200 रु. प्रति माह की दर से पेंशन प्रदान करने के लिए राष्ट्रीय सामाजिक सहायता कार्यक्रम के क्षेत्र का विस्तार करने का निर्णय लिया है।

देश में खाद्यान्नों का उत्पादन कुल आबादी की मांग को पूरा करने के लिए पर्याप्त हैं। पुनः बढ़ती हुई मांग को पूरा करने के लिए देश के अन्दर पर्याप्त उत्पादन सुनिश्चित करने हेतु, 2007-08 में राष्ट्रीय खाद्य सुरक्षा मिशन प्रारंभ किया गया है जिसका उद्देश्य वर्ष 2011-12 तक चावल, गेहूं तथा दालों का उत्पादन क्रमशः 10 मिलियन टन 8 मिलियन टन एवं 2 मिलियन टन तक बढ़ाना है।

विवरण-I

1999-2000 तथा 2004-05 में पर्याप्त खाद्य न उपलब्ध होने वाले परिवारों की प्रतिशतता का राज्यवार ब्यौरा

क्र.सं.	राज्य	पर्याप्त खाद्य न उपलब्ध होने वाले परिवार (1999-2000) (प्रतिशतता)		पर्याप्त खाद्य न उपलब्ध होने वाले परिवार (2004-2005) (प्रतिशतता)	
		ग्रामीण	शहरी	ग्रामीण	शहरी
1.	आंध्र प्रदेश	1.9	0.8	0.6	0.1
2.	असम	7.1	1.5	5.3	2.4
3.	बिहार	6.0	3.1	2.8	1.9
4.	छत्तीसगढ़			2.6	0.1
5.	गुजरात	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.0
6.	हरियाणा	1.5	0.8	0.0	0.2
7.	झारखण्ड			0.7	0.0
8.	कर्नाटक	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.1
9.	केरल	2.9	1.7	2.5	1.8
10.	मध्य प्रदेश	3.1	1.2	2.0	0.4
11.	महाराष्ट्र	1.9	0.6	1.0	0.5
12.	उड़ीसा	8.0	2.5	6.1	0.6
13.	पंजाब	0.2	0.1	0.9	0.2
14.	राजस्थान	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
15.	तमिलनाडु	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4
16.	उत्तर प्रदेश	2.1	1.0	1.7	0.8
17.	पश्चिम बंगाल	10.4	2.0	11.9	1.3
	अखिल **भारत**	3.3	0.9	2.4	0.5

स्रोत : राष्ट्रीय प्रतिदर्श सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट संख्या .466 भारतीय परिवारों में 1999-2000 में खाद्य उपभाग की अनुभव की गई पर्याप्तता राष्ट्रीय प्रतिदर्श सर्वेक्षण रिपोर्ट संख्या. .512 भारतीय परिवारों में 2004-05 में खाद्य उपभोग की अनुभव की गई पर्याप्तता

Starvation in the country

†*2. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:††

SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the International Food Policy Research Institute has stated that 23 crore people face starvation in India;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Balwant *Alias* Bal Apte.

(b) last five years' official figures thereon available with Government, State-wise details thereof;

(c) whether this situation is likely to further deteriorate in view of the current economic scenario; and

(d) if so, the plan to tackle this problem?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) No, Sir. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in their paper (October, 2008) on "The India State Hunger Index : Comparison of Hunger Across States", states there are more than 200 million people in India who are "food insecure".

As per Planning Commission, there are no official estimates of the number of people who face starvation in the country. However, as per the NSSO Reports on "Perceived adequacy of food consumption in Indian Households (Report No.466 for 1999-2000 and Report No.512 for 2004-05), the percentage of households in rural areas who did not get enough food has declined from 3.3% to 2.4% and in the urban areas, the percentage of such households has declined from 0.9% to 0.5% during 1999-2000 to 2004-05. State-wise details are given in Statement-I (*See* below).

(c) and (d) The current economic scenario is expected to impact India much less severely than rest of the world since several pro-poor policy measures are already under implementation. The major schemes and programmes in this regard are: (i) National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), which provides a guarantee of at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work, (ii) Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana covering all aspects of self-employment, (iii) Integrated Child Development Services to provide an integrated package of health, nutrition and educational services to children up to six years of age, pregnant women and nursing mothers, (iv) Mid-day Meal Scheme, introduced to enhance enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving nutritional levels among the children, (v) The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) provides food grains at much lower than the market prices to the poor and vulnerable sections of the society, (vi) The Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) provides food grains to the poorest of the poor families at a highly subsidized rate, (vii) The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) aims at providing social assistance benefits to poor households in the case of old age, death of the breadwinner and maternity. The Government has decided to expand the scope of NSAP to provide pension at the rate of Rs. 200 per month as Central assistance per beneficiary to certain categories of persons belonging to household below the poverty line according to the criteria prescribed.

The production of foodgrains in the country is adequate to meet the demand of the total population. Further, to ensure adequate production within the country to meet the increasing demand, the 'National Food Security Mission' was launched in 2007-08 which aims at increasing production of rice, wheat and pulses by 10 million tonnes, 8 million tonnes and 2 million tonnes respectively by 2011-12.

Statement-I

Statewise details of Percentage of Households Not getting enough Food in 1999-2000 & 2004-05

Sl. No.	States	Households Not getting enough Food (1999-2000) (Percentage)		Households Not getting enough Food (2004-05) (Percentage)	
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1.9	0.8	0.6	0.1
2.	Assam	7.1	1.5	5.3	2.4
3.	Bihar	6.0	3.1	2.8	1.9
4.	Chhattisgarh			2.6	0.1
5.	Gujarat	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.0
6.	Haryana	1.5	0.8	0.0	0.2
7.	Jharkhand			0.7	0.0
8.	Karnataka	0.9	0.2	0.3	0.1
9.	Kerala	2.9	1.7	2.5	1.8
10.	Madhya Pradesh	3.1	1.2	2.0	0.4
11.	Maharashtra	1.9	0.6	1.0	0.5
12.	Orissa	8.0	2.5	6.1	0.6
13.	Punjab	0.2	0.1	0.9	0.2
14.	Rajasthan	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
15.	Tamil Nadu	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4
16.	Uttar Pradesh	2.1	1.0	1.7	0.8
17.	West Bengal	10.4	2.0	11.9	1.3
All India		3.3	0.9	2.4	0.5

SOURCE: NSS Report No. 466; Perceived Adequacy of Food Consumption in Indian Households 1999-2000.

NSS Report No. 512; Perceived Adequacy of Food Consumption in Indian Households 2004-05.

SHRI BALAVANT *alias* BAL APTE: Sir, to deal with the question of starvation, it needs a comprehensive policy framework, along with food, agriculture and farmers. Today, we find that all these aspects are considered in a disjointed way. Therefore, the process of planning gets affected. On the one hand, you tell the farmers that they need not depend on agriculture. You want the population, depending on agriculture, to be reduced; on the other hand, the farmer is given, if at all, only a minimum price that will help him survive. There is no profit in it. He can't produce more. Therefore, is there any policy framework in the mind of the Government that will deal with starvation

directly, that will give the farmers profit-making remunerations, which will give the agriculture the necessary priority, and where food will be a matter of concern? Is there any such framework in the mind of the Government? Is the Minister in a position to spell it out?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, there are three aspects about the farmers and farmers' position, how to improve the productivity, and, ultimately, how to resolve the problem of the food security of this country. The most important thing is the availability of the food and production of the food. This Government has taken a conscious decision to provide a better price to the farmers. One can just see the prices that were provided for wheat last year. It was somewhat Rs. 1000/- per quintal. It was, in the next year, raised by Rs. 300/- per quintal. Similar is the situation in the case of rice, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane, and practically each and every crop. Because of this farmer-friendly policy, one can see that in the year 2005-06, the total production in this country was 208 million tonnes; in the year 2006-07, it had gone to 217 million tonnes; and, in the year 2007-08, it had gone to 230 million tonnes. So, there was 6.2 per cent growth in the year 2007-08. This is a clear-cut indication as to why there was more production. It was mainly because of the proper prices provided to the farmers.

Now, I come to the issue of starvation. The part 'a' of the question says, "Whether it is a fact that the International Food Policy Research Institute has stated that 23 crore people face starvation in India;". In fact, I tried to collect the International Food Policy Research Institute's report. They had published a paper in October 2008. Its subject is, "The India State Hunger Index–Comparison of Hunger Across States." The actual statement which they have made does not say that it is 23 crores, and, secondly, they have not mentioned that as 'starvation'. Their statement states that there are more than 200 million people in India who are 'food insecure'. They have mentioned it as 'food insecure', and there is a difference between the 'starvation' and 'the food insecure'. The availability of foodgrains is there. I have to accept one thing that there are sizable sections in the society where the availability of food is there but they have a limited purchasing power and, therefore, they are not in a position to afford the purchase as per their requirement. So, I am not in a position to deny that factual position. That is a factual position, and, in fact, in the last year or in the year before the last year, globally, the foodgrain prices had gone up like anything and that has affected the poor sections of the society, not only in India but also throughout the globe. The FAO had called a separate meeting for that purpose and taken certain actions.

But forget about what is happening outside India. In our country with regard to the section which is facing the problem of food insecurity, the Government of India has taken many decisions and this is not only today. The previous Government had also taken many decisions; today's Government has improved upon these decisions and one can see it. If we take the case of IFPRI, they have said that a population of 23 crore comes under the category of 'food insecurity'. Sir, let us analyse this figure of '23 crore'. The figure of '23 crore' is not accepted by the Planning Commission and this figure is also not accepted by the NSSO. But still I am ready to accept this for calculation purposes. They have

said that a population of 23 crore is affected. Now, to help those people, under the AAY, Antyodaya Anna Yojana, we are providing foodgrains - 35 kg per family; wheat at two rupees per kilo and rice at three rupees per kilo - to 13 crore people. Under the BPL, where we are providing foodgrains at cheaper rate, we have covered a population of 21 crore. So, this figure combined together - the number of people covered under AAY, BPL plus the number of people covered under the Old Age Pension, which is around 1.57 crore - comes to around 36 crore. The IFPRI is saying that a population of 23 crore is affected. So, we have already taken care of 36 crore people and then there are some other schemes where some alternative arrangements have been made which has been given in detail here ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Second supplementary, please. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, please, we are coming to it.

SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Sir, this answer itself shows that on many occasions, statistics do fudge the realities plus we are talking about 200 million and 23 crores; it is all the same. One is mentioned in millions and the other is mentioned in crores. That's all. But the fact remains that that figure is given and 'food insecure' is a sophisticated way to refer to 'starvation' like these days, to respect the individual, we don't call him 'blind', we call him 'visually challenged', but the reality is starvation. So, let us not fudge over it and if it is 23 cores, then yes, it is 23 crores. But the answer says that there are no official estimates in the Planning Commission.

Now, in a poor country, where poverty and starvation go together, we don't have any official estimates. So, we are not addressing the problem at all. Sir, there are statistics and statistics. The same agency has said that the agricultural GDP may decrease by 16 per cent within the next ten years. The same says that at the global hunger index, India is 66.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the supplementary question?

SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Sir, the supplementary question, therefore, is whether the Government finds it necessary to know what the challenge before the people is by an official statistical estimate of poverty as well as hunger and whether the Government will ensure that such official statistical estimate is available by actually going to the people, not sitting in the offices, as sometimes happen with many of the Government statistics which are made in the offices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please put the question. You have asked the supplementary question. Let it be answered.

SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Sir, the specific question is whether Government has any plans to have statistics on this, so that they could meet the challenges. They don't know the challenges at all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All right. That is the specific question.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: It is a good thing that they are now accepting statistics. Earlier there were remarks that these are statistics alone.

As stated in the reply, the Planning Commission does not have any official estimates of the number of people who face starvation. However, our NSS Organisations do collect information every year about population living below the Poverty Line, that is, BPL. So, Government of India, as also the State Governments, regularly get that report and figures, and that is the reason why various types of schemes have been introduced. I have already given information regarding availability of foodgrains at cheaper rates; it is the responsibility of the State Governments as also the Government of India to provide them, particularly to the vulnerable sections of society. Now, who constitute the vulnerable sections of the society? The AAY scheme is meant for that category. I have already stated in the House that to that particular category we are providing 35 kg of foodgrains at the rate of two or three rupees per kilo, especially wheat and rice. So, that is definitely a support to this section. And we provide the same quantity at different rates as well to BPL families. So, Government has taken enough measures for these sections and made allocations to all the States; there is no reduction in allocation for these two categories. After getting sufficient food stock from the Government of India, their distribution is the responsibility of the State Governments. Distribution at the village level or at the lowest level is the job of the State Governments. Our job is to supply foodgrains at a reasonable rate, which we are doing.

SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE: Sir, these days poverty is being marketed by films and books. Let Government give a clear picture about poverty.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have asked your question. Please allow your colleague to ask the second supplementary. Shri Shreegopal Vyas.

श्री श्रीगोपाल व्यास: धन्यवाद सभापति महोदय, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि ग्याहरवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में योजना आयोग के साथ बैठकर यह विचार-विमर्श हुआ है कि प्रत्येक जिले पर, जिले की स्थिति के अनुसार योजना बनाई जाएगी और केंद्र भी उसमें अधिक योगदान करेगा। अभी स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय ने यूनिसेफ के जरिए एक सर्वे कराया है कि इस देश में तीन साल से छोटे 46% बच्चे कुपोषण के शिकार हैं। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह पूछना चाहता हूं और देश के लिए आश्वासन भी चाहता हूं कि यह जो जिलेवार योजना ग्यारहवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में बनाने जा रहे हैं, यह अच्छी बात है, परंतु क्या इसमें केंद्र का योगदान इतना अवश्य होगा कि ये बच्चे कुपोषण के शिकार न हों, कृपया यह आश्वासन हमें दे दीजिए।

श्री शरद पवार: सभापति जी, एग्रीकल्चर प्रोडक्शन बढ़ाने के लिए भारत सरकार ने देश के सभी चीफ मिनिस्टर्स की एक मीटिंग बुलाकर डिसिजन ले लिया है on 19th May, the year before last year, where Rs. 25,000 crores have been provided for enhancing food production in the country. One of the decisions taken there was that State Government which would like to submit their proposals to Government of India need to prepare District Plans and the amount equivalent to the contribution that a State Government proposes to make would be provided by Government of India. Implementation of this particular scheme has been started since last year and our first year's experience has been quite good. Most of the States are taking advantage of this. We observed that there is improvement in

food production and that is the reason why we had reached the mark of 213 million tonnes last year; highest procurement was made in the last year. So, the first job is definitely done by the respective State Governments with the support of the Government of India. Now, coming to the question of children, I will not be able to give detailed information about this, but there are certain schemes which have been introduced in this country like the Mid-day Meal Scheme in ICSE, and it is the responsibility of the Food Ministry to provide foodgrains to them. We are supplying the foodgrains to all the schemes on their demand and the various other departments and institutions are executing the schemes.

MS. MABEL REBELLO: I was listening to the hon. Minister. He has been saying that the foodgrains production has increased. Sir, the Government of India has given a commitment to the UN. As per the UN Millennium Development Goal, India has to decline the percentage of population suffering from hunger by 2015. Today we are in 2009 and absolute number of people suffering from hunger is increasing instead of declining. Will you be able to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goal by 2015? I would like to know that.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: I can definitely say that it is planned to enhance food production in this country. Of course, one thing I have to make absolutely clear that sometimes foodgrains production declines because of the seasonal factors like uncertainty about the monsoon and so on. We are taking all the precautions that we are supposed to take from the Government of India like availability of credit, availability of seed, availability of fertilizers, proper prices for the farmer and all sorts of incentives to the farmers. From all these angles, all precautions have been taken and we are getting results, and I am confident that ...*(Interruptions)*...

MS. MABEL REBELLO: But our number should decline. Instead this number is increasing. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: You are asking about the production. So, I am confident that whatever the commitment has been made to the UN we will reach to that stage by 2015. That planning has been done and the implementation has been started and we started getting results. Now so far as the question of starvation or hunger or the availability of food is concerned, definitely allocation will be made more and our efforts will be there to achieve this particular percentage. The latest report of the NSSO shows that that percentage is going down.

MS. MABEL REBELLO: No, Sir ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, my question relates to part 5 of the Minister's answer in which he said that the targeted Public Distribution System provides foodgrains at a price which is much lower than the market price to the poorand vulnerable sections of the society, सर, मेरा सवाल यह है

कि "poor and vulnerable sections" की परिभाषा क्या है? मंत्री जी ने अपने जवाब में यह कहा, "I am not in a position to state that people have the purchasing power to buy available foodgrains." आपने स्वीकार किया कि लोगों की जेब में पैसा है या नहीं है, इसके बारे में आप कोई आश्वासन नहीं दे सकते हैं। इसी सदन में अर्जुन सेनगुप्त कमीशन की रिपोर्ट पर बहस करते वक्त यह आंकड़ा सामने आया है कि आज 77 प्रतिशत लोगों के पास purchasing power का जो मापदण्ड है, वह यह है कि वे एक दिन में 20 रुपए से कम खर्च करते हैं। मंत्री जी से मेरा कहना यह है कि आपने 36 करोड़ को cover किया है। APL section की परिभाषा यह है कि जो लोग ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में 11 रुपए से ज्यादा कमाते हैं, वे APL में आते हैं। वे आपकी सरकारी परिभाषा में poor and vulnerable sections में नहीं आते हैं। जब आप स्वयं यह स्वीकार कर रहे हैं कि लोगों की जेब में purchasing power नहीं है, तो क्या आप कम-से-कम अपने BPL अंत्योदय का आज जो मापदण्ड है, उसको बढ़ा कर कम-से-कम उस 77 प्रतिशत जनता तक पहुंचाने का कदम उठाएंगे या नहीं? कृपया आप इसका जवाब दीजिए।

श्री शरद पवार: सर, जैसा मैंने शुरू में कहा कि it is true that there are certain sections in the society whose purchasing power is weak and that is the reason why special precaution has been taken. We are not neglecting that. Now the question comes of those who come above the "poverty line. It is true that whatever allocation has been made to the States for AAY-BPL is one allocation and that is 35 kg. and the allocation for the APL depends on the availability. In some States it is 9 kg. or 10 kg. and some States are not accepting and that is why it is lower also. For instance, take the case of rice. Sir, there is no shortage of wheat. As on today, whatever demand is coming from any State in this country for allocation of additional quantity of wheat, we are accepting that and we are providing that. That is not the issue. But, till last year, there was a serious problem about the availability of rice. There are certain States, particularly, in the southern India, where there is more demand for rice, and, serious problem was being faced. We are improving our procurement this year, we started enhancing the quota and giving additional allocation. I will be happy to collect all this information as to how much additional rice, in the last six months, has been given to Kerala, Tamil Nadu. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will you extend the BPL category status to seventy seven per cent of the population? That is my question, Sir. I am not asking about the APL. You said, the purchasing power. *...(Interruptions)...* I am simply asking that, Sir.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: No, no. It is the conscious decision of the Government of India to, at least, target the*...(Interruptions)...* We have targeted the vulnerable sections. *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please don't interrupt. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: No, it is not. The targeted public distribution system. *...(Interruptions)...*

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, seventy-seven per cent of the population on less than 20 rupees a day! What is poor and vulnerable?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, when the policy was changed about 7-8 years ago, a conscious decision was taken by the Government to introduce the targeted public distribution system. What is

targeted? Where is the target? It is targeted towards the weaker sections. So, we are taking care of the weaker sections. In fact, this year, our food subsidy Bill will go practically to somewhere near Rs. 49 to 50 thousand crores from Rs. 19,000 crores. So, we are providing that type of subsidy and the reason is that we would like to protect the interests of the targeted sections first, and, if there is more production, certainly, we will look into it and try to protect the interests of other sections. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, your buffer stock is eighty per cent more now. Surplus stock is there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri N.K. Singh.

SHRI N.K. SINGH: Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the statement contained in Statement-I of his reply, in which, he will notice that the data stops at the year 2004-05. Sir, the data is missing for the last four important years since it is shown up to 2004-05 only. Is the Minister aware that international reports, particularly, from the FAO and the United Nations, suggest that on account of unabated inflation in the last two years and the global meltdown, 200 million people have gone back into starvation and have gone back below the poverty syndrome? Is the Minister, therefore, aware of the need to have more contemporary data to assess the actual incidence of the increased burden on account of the economic events during the last two years?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, I am fully aware about one thing. Year before last year, FAO had published a data, which mentioned that because of the high-rising prices globally, a sizable section – I do not recollect exactly but, I think, it is 75 million population has been affected. It is the addition to the population which is facing serious problem of food insecurity, and, the reason, essentially, was the prices of the foodgrains.

In fact, we have adopted a two-pronged strategy. We want to improve our production. There is no choice; we have to give incentive to the farmer, we have to give better prices. We have provided better prices. Simultaneously, we have provided substantial subsidy for the public distribution system, especially, to that section which is not in a position to buy it at a particular rate. That is why, at cheaper rates, foodgrains have been supplied to all the States, which come under these two categories, about which I have already given you the information. We are fully aware about that report. We are fully aware about the issue. But, now the trend, which we are observing in our own country, is that the prices are going down. This is what we have seen in the inflation rate. ...*(Interruptions)*... Yes, including food also. If there is. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: No, Sir. The prices of food items are not going down.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: I can tell you, in the last two years, or, one year, there has been no change in the wheat prices throughout India. You can check this. There is a definite. ...*(Interruptions)*... I do not say that. ...*(Interruptions)*...